

REMARKS

Claims 26 through 35 remain pending in the present application.

No claims have been amended.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

The Examiner has rejected Claims 26 and 32 through 35 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Weisner et al (4,278,414) herein referred to as the '414 patent. The Examiner alleges that the '414 patent discloses Applicant's invention.

Applicants' independent Claim 26 discloses, among other elements, the heating of a sheet to a glass transition temperature. The heating is terminated prior to placing the sheet in the first and second mold halves. A vacuum is generated in the mold halves. The sheet is cooled from a first temperature to a second temperature upon achieving a specific draw depth of the sheet while the sheet is within the first and second mold halves.

The Weisner '414 patent disclosed by the Examiner fails to disclose or suggest Applicants' invention. Weisner discloses that the clamping frames and the thin polymer sheet are heated to soften the thin polymer sheet at which time the upper platen and lower platens are closed upon the sheet. Column 3, lines 51 through 54. Thus, the sheet is heated while it is in the mold halves. This is unlike Applicants' invention. The

'414 patent does not disclose terminating heating of the material prior to placement in the halves. Also, the '414 patent fails to disclose or suggest cooling the sheet while it is in the mold halves. This is further illustrated by the Examiner indicating that the sheet is cooled by unloading the sheet from the forming stations. Thus, the '414 patent fails to disclose or suggest Applicants' invention.

Accordingly, Claims 26 and 32 through 35 are believed to be patentably distinct over the Weisner '414 patent.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner has rejected Claims 27, 29, 30, 31 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a). The Examiner alleges Claims 27 and 29 are unpatentable over the Weisner '414 patent in view of Weisner's '776. Also, the Examiner rejects these two claims further in view of the Bangerter et al reference. The Examiner rejects Claims 30 to 31 in view of the two Weisner patents further in view of Christensen et al.

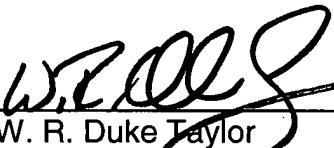
As mentioned above, the Weisner '414 patent fails to disclose or suggest Applicant's invention. The Weisner '776 patent, as well as the Bangerter et al and Christensen et al references fail to remedy the deficiencies of the Weisner '414 patent. Thus, Applicants believe Claims 27, 29, 30, and 31 to be patentably distinct over the art cited by the Examiner.

In light of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants submit

that all pending claims are in condition for allowance and accordingly Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to pass the case to issue at her earliest possible convenience. Should the Examiner have any questions regarding the present application, she should not hesitate to contact the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: June 30, 2003

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